

BOARD OF SELECTMEN

Minutes of May 7, 2007

Clerk Jackson called the meeting to order at 7:30PM. Board members present were Boyd Jackson, Richard Gandt, John McArdle, and Richard Carlson. Steve Clark was absent. Of the Selectmen's staff Town Administrator Virginia Wilder, & Donna Rich, Board Secretary, were in attendance. Other persons present were Jane Schraffa of Topsfield Cable, Hilary Shepard of the Tri-Town Transcript and Faye Raynard of the Village Reporter. Topsfield citizens were Joel Larson and Dave Larson.

Announcements: Clerk Jackson said he would be running the meeting in the absence of Chairman Clark. Clerk Jackson stated that Mr. Dick Carlson won the election. Clerk Jackson welcomed Mr. Carlson to the Board. Clerk Jackson said that an election traditionally takes place the first meeting following a Town Election for a new chairman and clerk for the Board. Clerk Jackson nominated Selectmen John McArdle as chairman; seconded by Selectman Gandt. Selectman Gandt said he felt initially uncomfortable having the elections without Chairman Clark present. However, he had been informed that Selectman McArdle would not be present for the next meeting and felt that the Board should move on the elections. Clerk Jackson stated that he had spoken with Chairman Clark and he was in agreement with moving forward with the Board elections. Vote taken, all in favor: 3-0, Chairman McArdle abstained. Next was the election of a clerk, Selectman Jackson entertained a nomination from Chairman McArdle to nominate A. Richard Gandt as clerk; seconded by Selectman Jackson, so voted 3-0, Selectman Gandt abstained. Selectman Jackson asked Selectman Carlson if he would like to address the citizens of Topsfield. Selectman Carlson said he was delighted to be on the Board. Selectman Jackson announced that the Board would go into executive session at the end of the meeting to discuss the Fire Union Contract, Police Union Contract, Highway & Water Union Contract, Parks & Cemetery Union Contract, and Police Reserve Union Contract and that they would not return to open session.

Selectmen Minutes: Selectman Jackson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 23, 2007 as amended; seconded by Selectman Gandt; so voted 3-0. Selectman Carlson abstained. Selectman Gandt made a motion to accept the minutes from the Executive Session of April 23, 2007 and to hold until all issues have been resolved; seconded by Selectman Jackson, so voted 3-0. Selectman Carlson abstained.

OLD BUSINESS:

Annual Town meeting Follow-up: Selectman Carlson commented that he was pleased with the length of the meeting; John Kinhan did a good job of moving the meeting along. Selectman Carlson also noted that the discussions on the water and mosquito articles are what make a Town Meeting worthwhile. Selectman Gandt asked if there was enough time given to hear citizen's opinions. There was much discussion regarding the low attendance and different ideas were generated along with other general comments:

- the floor covering is a potential tripping hazard and needs to be addressed
- was there a sufficient amount of chairs if additional citizens attended
- Should we consider more comfortable chairs

- move the awards ceremony to a different venue, eg. a televised BOS meeting
- possibly serve refreshments
- hold Town Meeting at a different time of year, possibly February
- hold Town meeting on a different day of the week, for example on a Saturday
 - babysitting might be less of an issue with High School students
 - Citizens might be more available
 - Athletic programs however might be in conflict
- Publicize with a banner
- Survey citizens for suggestions

Selectman Jackson noted that further discussion was needed surrounding the Annual Town Meeting.

Another item was that the cut off date for the Warrant needed to be addressed to avoid last minute hand-outs.

NEW BUSINESS:

Retiree Health Insurance: Ms. Wilder was asked to explain and stated that the Town is being given an opportunity by MIIA to accept the Medex 2 plan or to revisit the plan in the fall with a start date of January. The prescription plan is the main change between the Medex 2 proposal and the Town's existing Plan. The MIIA attended an open meeting with over 20 retirees in attendance. Selectman Gandt made a motion for the Town to continue with the current plan and revisit the issue in the fall for a January start date; second by Selectman Jackson, so voted 4-0. Chairman McArdle signed the document.

Property and Liability & Workers' Comp Insurance: Selectman Gandt made a motion to approve the Town's Property and Liability and Worker's Comp Insurance as proposed by MIIA; seconded by Selectman Jackson, so voted 4-0. Chairman McArdle signed the document.

Selectman's Budget Breakdown: Selectman Gandt stated some citizens wanted clarification on the Selectman's Budget in the category of "Other" and "Special Other". It was announced that anyone can go to the Selectman's office and review the budgets.

The primary FY07 expenditures to date for these two budgets were summarized as follows:
Selectmen's Other (Y-T-D expenditures \$22860)

Account	Amount	%
Telephone	15231	67
Annual Warrant/Town Report	3135	14
Publication	1760	8
Dues	1579	7

of which vendor Verizon represents 66% of expenditures.

Selectmen's Special Other (Y-T-D expenditures \$91,790)

Account	Amount	%
Legal Services	54398	59
Contractual Clerical	19619	21
Board of Health Engineering	7500	8

of which vendor Kopelman & Paige represents 59%. The Contracted Clerical Services represents expenditures relative to the retirement of a Town employee.

For FY08, "Special Other" is budgeted for \$90,900. There was discussion surrounding how to better "label" these two accounts in future budgets.

Fire Department Educational Reimbursement: Selectman Gandt made a motion to approve reimbursement to Robert L. Boeri and Mark Fortuna in the amount of \$928 each for completion of the basic EMT training course held at North Shore Community College. Selectman Jackson seconded, so voted 4-0. The Board congratulated the two for their accomplishment.

Board of Selectmen Meeting Schedule: There was discussion regarding the possibility of changing from a weekly schedule to a bi-weekly basis beginning in May to continue through September. There would still be weekly packets available for the Selectman to receive their incoming correspondence.

Town Administrator's Report:

Please see attached report.

Correspondence & Reports

- Several letters and reports were received
 - Demolition Permit requested for 35 Main St
 - Demolition Permit requested for 53 Main St
 - MASCO Scholarship Foundation Policy
 - Paper Shredding Event: Selectman Gandt made an announcement that Boxford Recycling Committee is hosting a paper shredding event to take place on a Saturday in June from 8-12 at a location to be announced. They will accept up to 3 boxes of paper.
 - Conservation Commission to newspaper clarifying their position on an article involving M BD Outdoor Power Equipment
 - Willowdale Tax Protest: Chairman McArdle stated that this was an expected action from them.
 - MMA Action Alert #6 received.
 - Damaged shrubs claim status received from MIIA.
 - EOE Grant Notice: Selectmen Gandt requested it to be sent to Open Space.
 - Verizon 2006 Annual Financial Filing.
 - Wilmor Road drainage letter received. Selectman Gandt had been to the location to meet with Robert Murphy of 42 Wilmor Rd. Half of the beaver dam is on Town property. Letter was forwarded to appropriate Town Departments and Committees.
 - Rev. Rhyne Installation invitation.
 - Rail Trail Committee response letter that was forwarded to all the citizens that had signed the petition concerned about the trail development.

Selectman Gandt gave an overview of the election.

MASCO Assessment of \$78,277, Article 7 was defeated by 57%

Replace and Repair Highway Bridges, Article 17th was approved by 60%

The establishment of DPW failed by 52%

The issuance of a third liquor license was approved by 72%

The question of considering a leash law was approved by 61%

All results are posted on the Town Web Site.

Warrants: The Selectmen signed and approved warrants in the amount of **\$296,387.53**. The breakdown is as follows:

Warrant #FY07:	
089T	\$ 66,998.65
090	\$229,388.88

Executive Session: At 9:05 PM, Selectman Jackson entertained a motion to go into executive session to discuss the Highway/Water Union Contracts, Parks & Cemetery Union Contracts, Fire Union Contract, Police Union Contract and Police Reserve Union Contract. A yes vote was recorded for Selectmen Gandt, Chairman McArdle, Selectman Jackson and Selectman Carlson. The Board would not return to regular session. Virginia Wilder and Donna Rich were present also.

Respectively submitted,

Donna Rich, Secretary
Board of Selectmen's Office

Approved as amended at the May 14, 2007 Board of Selectmen meeting.